

How to Celebrate Juneteenth

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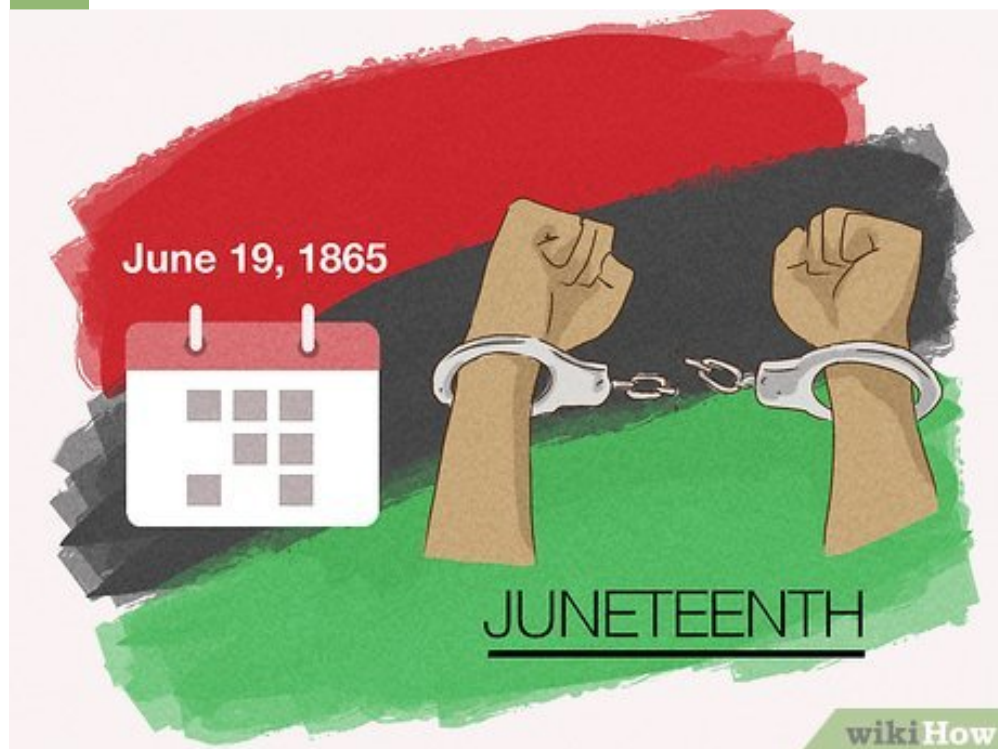
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Juneteenth is an American holiday celebrated on June 19, which marks the anniversary of when enslaved people were freed in 1865. While this holiday marks an incredibly important historical event, it's a bigger celebration of African-American culture and heritage. This is an important holiday for all Americans to remember the importance of human freedoms and rights, along with the resilience of the human spirit.^[1] You can celebrate this holiday reflectively by yourself, or take time to celebrate with your friends, family, and fellow community members.

Method
1

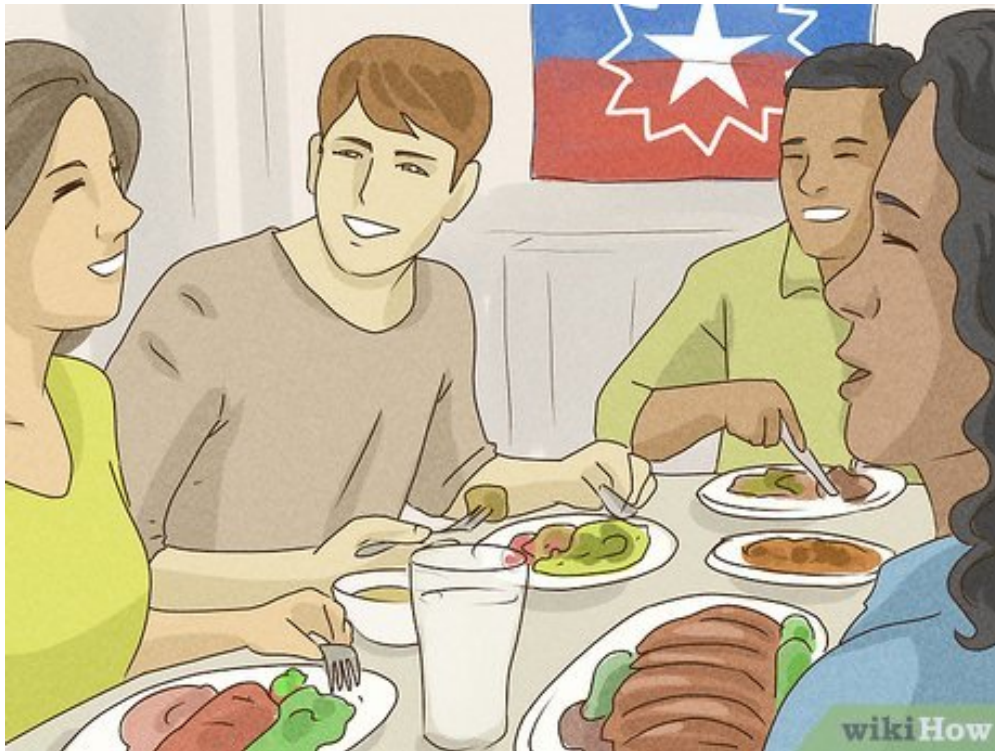
Method 1 of 5: Reflecting on the Meaning of the Holiday



1 Review the history of Juneteenth to understand why it's important today.

Juneteenth originated on June 19, 1865, when the government decreed that enslaved people were free. This declaration took place 2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and June 19th soon became a day of celebration for decades to come. While Juneteenth is still a celebration of freedom, it's also an important day to remember African-American history. Additionally, it's a great day to think about how people can improve as both individuals and as an American society.^[2]

- If you want to learn more, there are many free websites that have a lot of information about both Juneteenth and the Civil War, like PBS, History.com, and many news sites.



2 Enjoy a special meal with your family to celebrate. Order takeout from a nice restaurant or prepare a big meal that everyone in your family will enjoy. Jazz up your table with Juneteenth decorations, like a festive tablecloth or other symbolic decor, like the Juneteenth flag. Take time to discuss with your family about why Juneteenth is so important, and what you all can do to make the world a better, more equal place.^[3]

- You can use this dinner as a time to set personal goals for yourself. For instance, you can say something like: "I want to donate 10% of my paycheck to activist groups" or "I'm going to become a better advocate for marginalized people in my community."



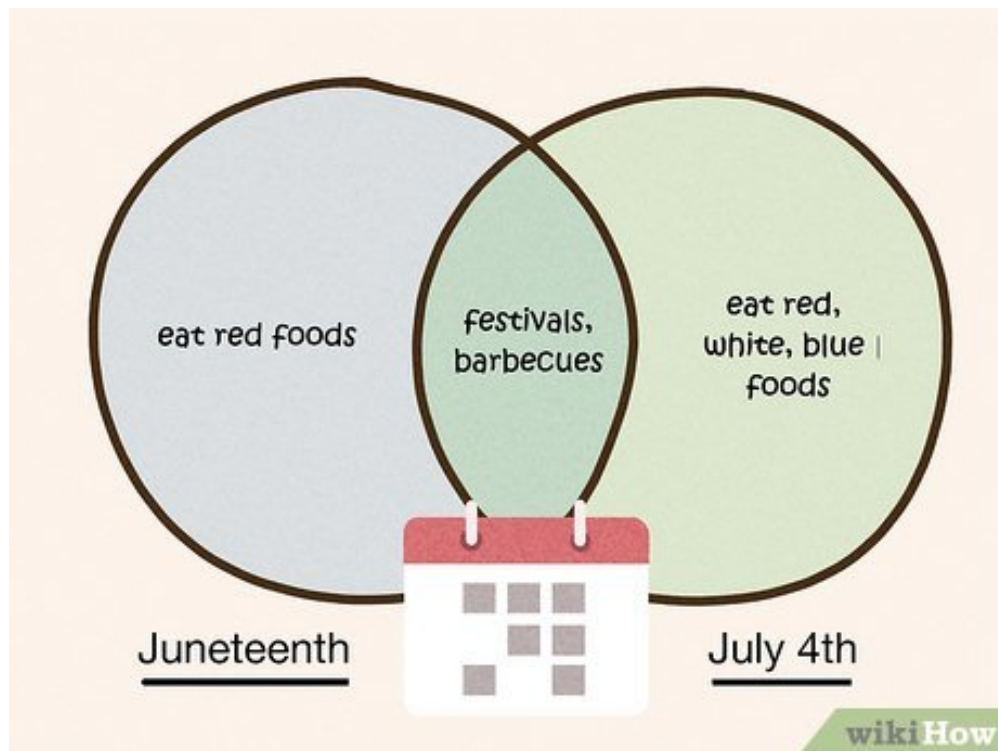
3 Invite friends over to reflect on the importance of Juneteenth. Host a small-together with a few trusted friends, where you can share fun facts about the holiday, along with other meaningful quotes or historical tidbits that really capture the free, progressive spirit of Juneteenth. Talk with one another about how past historical events have affected you, and how you think American society can still improve.^[4]

- For instance, if you come from a marginalized community, you can share a story about how you were discriminated against, and how you've adapted and grown from that experience.
- You can also take time to thank the friends and family members who support and encourage you on a daily basis.



4 Write a personal plan or goal for yourself. Think about how you can grow and improve as a human being in the future, and how you want to progress. Jot down a goal, wish, or plan of action for yourself to keep in mind even after Juneteenth is over. Keep this in a safe place so you can reflect and write a new goal or wish for yourself when the next Juneteenth rolls around!^[5]

- For instance, you can write something like: "I want to get accepted into one of my top 3 schools so I can make a positive difference in my community," or "I wish that my community took more steps to protect and uplift marginalized people."



5 Compare Juneteenth to July 4th with a Venn diagram. Draw out 2 overlapping circles for the chart, labeling one as “Juneteenth” and another as “July 4th.” Write down different traits of each holiday, and explore how these dates are similar and different. Remind yourself that Juneteenth is a time to celebrate and think about the importance of freedom for all people, while July 4th represents a historical event.^[6]

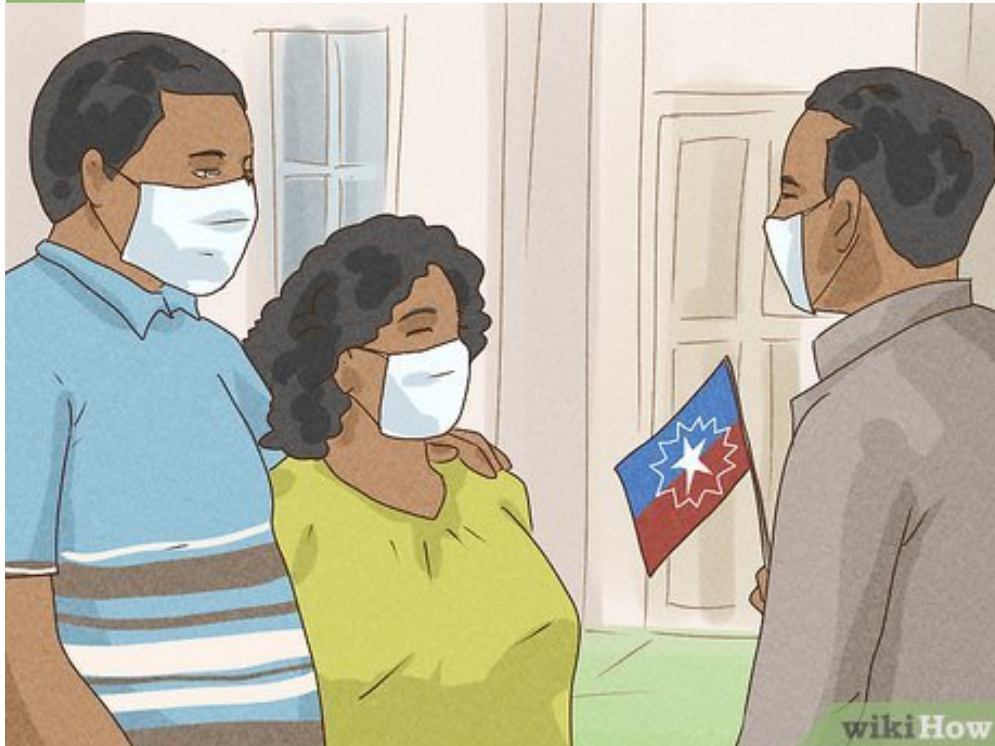
- For instance, you can say that people prefer to eat red foods on Juneteenth, while people eat red, white, and blue foods on July 4th.
- You can also point that both celebrations involve public celebrations, festivals, and barbecues.
- This is a great way to introduce and explain Juneteenth to young kids.



6 Read stories about Juneteenth to younger children. Take some time out of your day to sit with your younger friends and relatives and read them children's books about Juneteenth. After reading the story, remind the young ones that Juneteenth is a day to celebrate and remember the importance of freedom.[7]

- "Juneteenth for Maizie" by Floyd Cooper, "Juneteenth Jamboree" by Carole Boston Weatherford, and "Act Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom" by Angela Johnson are all great titles to consider.

Method 2 of 5: Observing Juneteenth in Your Community



1 Invite your neighbors to decorate with Juneteenth flags. Visit your next-door neighbors and encourage them to take part in this year's Juneteenth celebration. Ask them to hang a commemorative Juneteenth flag in their yard or on their porch to celebrate. To make this process easier, order several Juneteenth flags online that you can offer to your neighbors.^[8]

- You can buy Juneteenth flags online or in certain general stores.
- For reference, the Juneteenth flag is half navy blue and half red with a white star surrounded by a spiky circle in the center. Some flags have the original Juneteenth date printed along the side.
- When visiting your neighbors, explain why Juneteenth is such an important celebration. Say something like: "Juneteenth is an important day for all Americans to remember and celebrate the importance of freedom for all citizens and helps us remember and learn from the struggles of the past."



2 Attend a Juneteenth flag-raising ceremony. Search online to see if your community holds a flag-raising ceremony for the Juneteenth holiday. Do your best to attend, as these ceremonies are a popular way to celebrate and acknowledge the importance of Juneteenth and African-American heritage and culture.^[9]

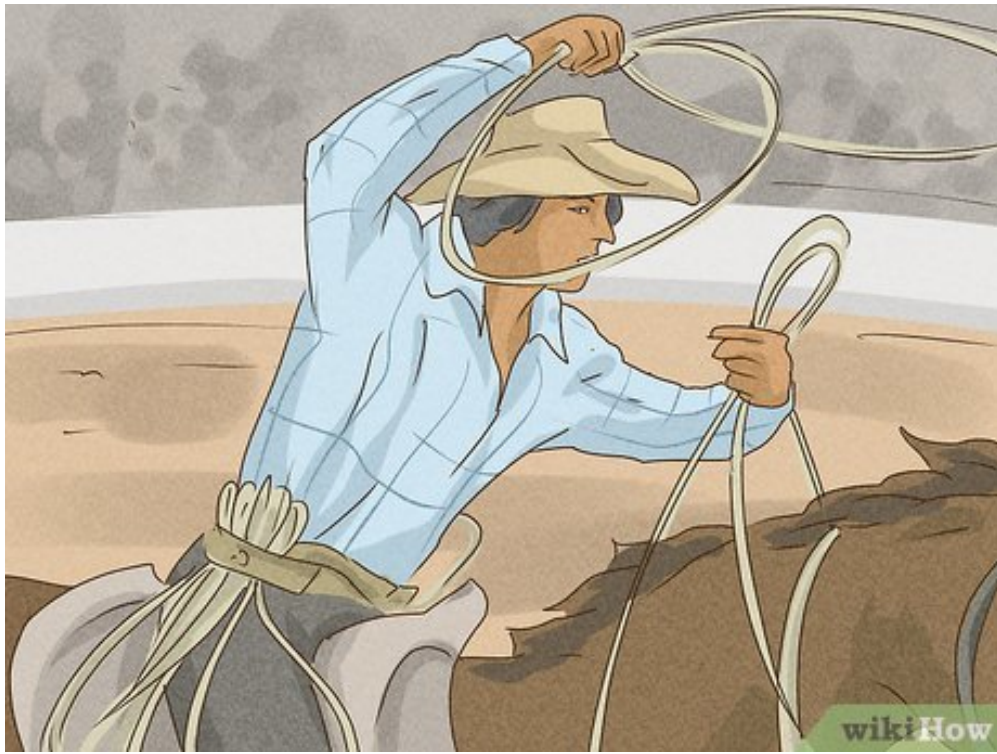
- If your community doesn't hold a flag-raising ceremony, send an email or letter to your town's officials to get the ball rolling.
- Flag-raising ceremonies are a great way to unite with your community and remember the importance of equality and freedom.



- 3 Host a block party to celebrate Juneteenth.** Invite your neighbors and the local community to a neighborhood-wide party. Encourage everyone to bring red food and drinks to share, and see if you can set up speakers to play music. As an extra touch, invite members of your local government and other keynote speakers to join the celebration.[10]
- Parties are a great way to celebrate with others while acknowledging the importance of freedom and equality in America.
 - Some areas like to celebrate Juneteenth with Motown music.[11]



- 4 Attend a parade if your town holds one.** Check online to see if a neighboring town or city is holding a parade to commemorate Juneteenth. You can celebrate with the participants of the parade as well as all the other people in attendance.[12]
- Many major cities host a Juneteenth parade, though these parades aren't always held on June 19th exactly.



5 Participate in or attend your community's local rodeo. Find out if and when your local town or city is hosting a Juneteenth rodeo. Note that these events are more exclusive to southern areas, like Texas, and may not be as relevant in other parts of America. If you're into outdoor activities, like wrangling animals, consider registering for the rodeo. If you're looking for a good place to sit back and celebrate, visit the rodeo as an attendee instead.

- Community events are a great way to band together and celebrate, even if you aren't participating.



6 Support Juneteenth celebrations held by businesses and establishments. Check online to see if your local museums, restaurants, and other businesses are doing anything commemorative for the holiday. Visit these buildings if and when they hold different celebrations, like a weekend of storytelling and carriage rides or an afternoon enjoying traditional Juneteenth food at a restaurant.^[13]

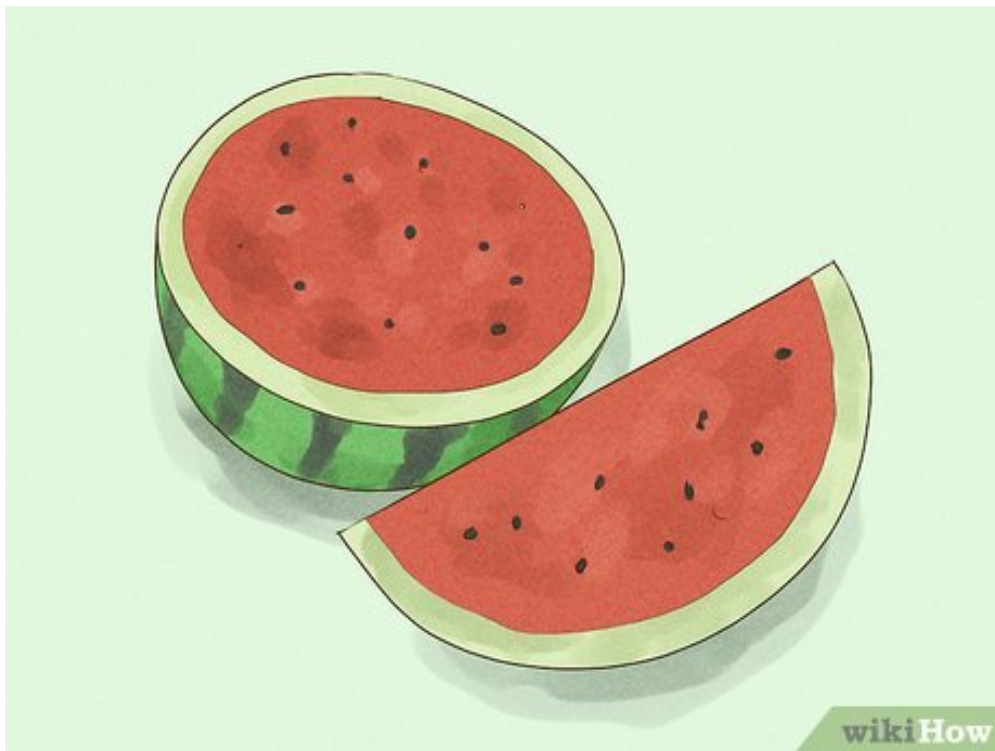
- These events are usually welcome to people of all ages.
- If your local businesses aren't getting involved or active in celebrating Juneteenth, ask them to put up a display to celebrate and remember the holiday.

Method 3 of 5: Making Festive Foods and Drinks



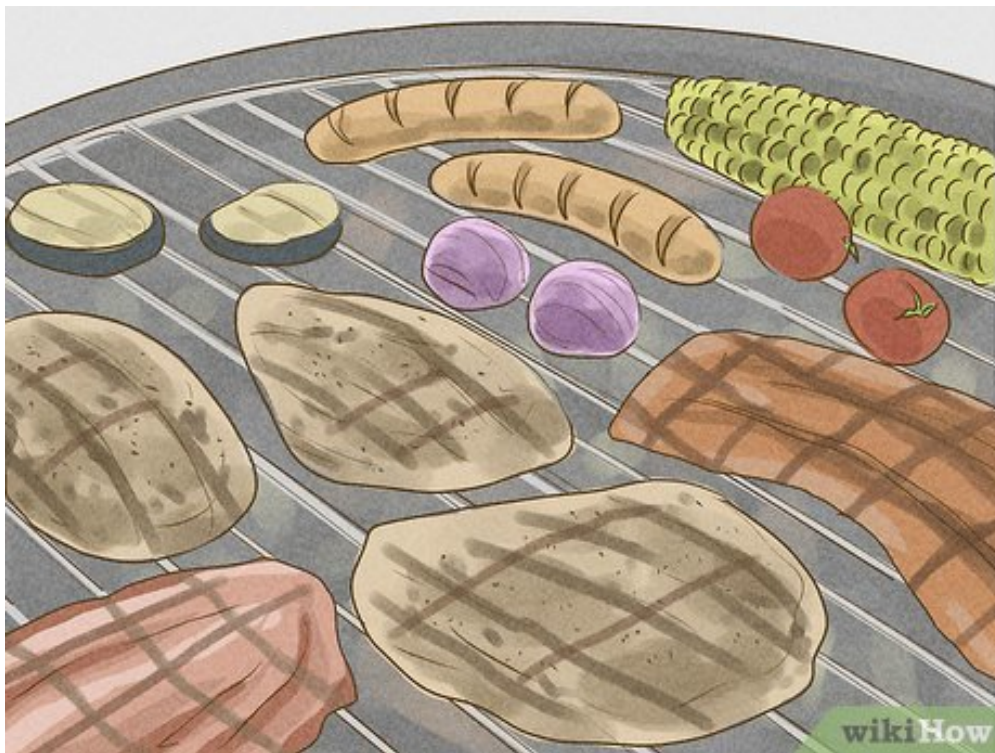
1 Dye soda or seltzer red with food coloring as a celebratory drink. Pour yourself a glass of seltzer water or clear soda, then add in a drop or 2 of red food coloring. Mix the coloring into the drink until the entire beverage is red. If needed, add a few more drops to make your drink extra red.^[14]

- This is a traditional Juneteenth beverage in some areas.
- If you aren't a fan of soda or seltzer water, drink some red hibiscus tea instead.^[15]



2 Enjoy a slice of watermelon on Juneteenth. Pick up some fruit for yourself, or get several watermelons to share with friends and family. Red is a significant color for the Juneteenth celebration, which makes watermelon a perfect snack or side dish for the occasion.^[16]

- Red soda and watermelon are heralded as classic Juneteenth refreshments.
- Any type of red drink or food is a great option for a Juneteenth celebration. Red signifies the blood that's previously and continuously been shed in the struggle for freedom, and is an important part of understanding and truly valuing the Juneteenth celebrations.



3 Barbecue a variety of food to celebrate Juneteenth. Fire up the grill and pile on some of your favorite summer meats, like ribs, pork chops, chicken wings, or brisket. Season these cuts with your favorite marinade, rub, or sauce, then serve them as the main course for your Juneteenth celebration.^[17]

- Barbecues are a huge part of Juneteenth culture.



4 Prepare collard greens as a side dish. Whip up a batch of collard greens, which are a classic Juneteenth side dish. You can make these with or without ham hock if you're catering to a more vegetarian audience.^[18]

- Collard greens were a typical crop grown during the era of slavery, which makes them a traditional food for Juneteenth celebrations.



5 Dig into tea cakes or sweet potato pie for dessert. Make your own sweet potato pie, or buy a premade dessert at your local grocery store. Additionally, bring a batch of tea cakes, or sweet cookies, to your Juneteenth celebration.^[19]

- Tea cakes especially are a huge part of Juneteenth tradition, and are a culinary way to stay mindful and connected to African-American culture.

Method
4

Method 4 of 5: Commemorating Juneteenth Virtually



1 Attend a virtual Juneteenth music festival. Search online for links to an online musical festival, which you can attend from the comfort of your own home. Take note of the date, as these festivals are sometimes held over several days.^[20]

- Online festivals are a great way to celebrate Juneteenth with friends and family all over the country!

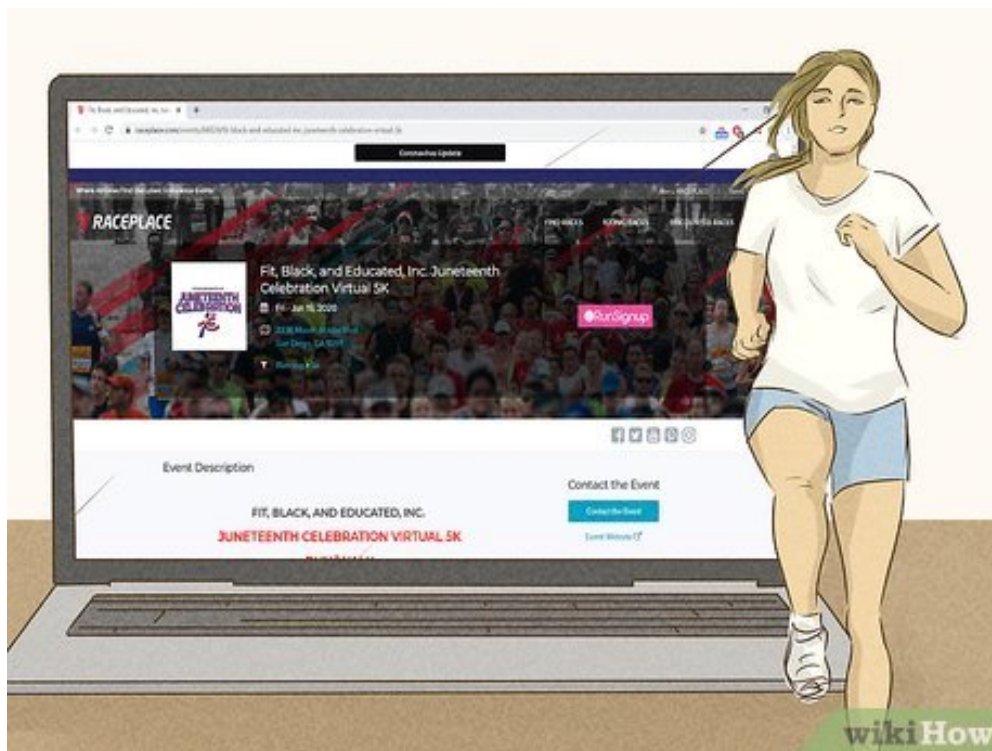


2 Enjoy online celebrations hosted by museums. Check local or national museum websites to see if they're holding any virtual exhibits or presentations related to Juneteenth. Read and click through these presentations from home—they can provide a captivating and informative narrative about the history and importance of the Juneteenth holiday.[21]

- For instance, the African American Museum of Iowa hosts a free online Juneteenth event that spans over several days.



3 Support community Juneteenth celebrations online. Look for virtual community productions and festivals, even if they aren't necessarily in your area. Virtually listen to storytellers, musicians, and other performers as they take you through the history of Juneteenth.[22]



4 Register for a virtual Juneteenth 5K. Look for “virtual” 5K Juneteenth runs online, which allow you to enroll and participate from the comfort of your own hometown. Use a GPS device to track how much you walk or run, then submit your results to the race!^[23]

- While 5Ks don’t directly connect to Juneteenth, they provide an outlet for many people to celebrate and acknowledge the holiday in a unified, productive way.
- Many runs will donate the proceeds to charity.

Method 5 of 5: Hosting Juneteenth Celebrations at Work



1 **Decorate your workplace with meaningful decor.** Hang festive decorations throughout the hallways, office spaces, and other open areas in your workspace. You can also give festive Juneteenth buttons and T-shirts to your co-workers and wear them on the 19th.^[24]

- For instance, you can hang the Juneteenth flag on the wall, or bring in cupcakes that have cake toppers with "Juneteenth" written on them.
- T-shirts and buttons are a great way to have a unified celebration.



2 Set aside time at work to debunk common racial stereotypes. Ask your boss if you can take some time to sit down and talk about why Juneteenth is so important, and how this significance connects to the workplace. Invite your co-workers to share and discuss common myths or stereotypes perpetuated about the African-American community, and then take time to debunk and refute these statements.^[25]

- For example, you can discuss examples of larger companies where instances of racial discrimination were reported, and why these practices are completely inappropriate for any workspace.



3 Review company initiatives that celebrate diversity. Celebrate the principles of your place of employment that celebrate and encourage inclusivity, freedom, and diversity, which are important qualities of the Juneteenth celebration. Brainstorm ways that the company can continue to be progressive and inclusive in the future.^[26]

- For instance, you might celebrate how your company offers fair, equal wages to each and every employee.



4 Invite a keynote speaker to your workplace. Send an email to a respected African-American member of your community, asking them to give a speech at your workplace. Encourage them to share what Juneteenth means to them, and how every American can get into the spirit of the holiday.^[27]



Tips

- Bring any kind of red food or drink to your local picnic or barbecue, like red beans

with rice, red velvet cake, or strawberry desserts.[28]

- Look for essay contests and other competitions centered around Juneteenth.[29]
- While Juneteenth is often thought to be the end of slavery in the United States, it was still legal to own slaves in Delaware and Kentucky until the 13th Amendment was ratified on December 6, 1865.[30]

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